

MATCH & RETURN

IT FL 03
3/29/03
C. Moore

Under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.

**REQUEST
FOR
CONTINUED EXAMINATION (RCE)
TRANSMITTAL**

Subsection (b) of 35 U.S.C. § 132, effective on May 29, 2000, provides for continued examination of an utility or plant application filed on or after June 8, 1995.

See The American Inventors Protection Act of 1999 (AIPA).

Approved for use through 10/31/2002. OMB 0651-0031
U.S. Patent and Trademark Office: U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

PTO/SB/30 (08-00)

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

+ + + + +

FITZPATRICK, CELLA, HARPER & SCINTO

1900 K STREET, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006-1110
(202) 530-1010

Facsimile:(202) 530-1055

FACSIMILE COVER SHEET

TO:	Patent Proof Copy Pilot Project	
FROM:	Steven E. Warner	
RE:	Application No. 09/901,087 Attorney Docket No. 00684.003216	
FAX NO.:	215-682-8284	
DATE:	March 31, 2003	NO. OF PAGES: 21 <small>(including cover page)</small>
TIME:	SENT BY:	

MESSAGE

**IF YOU DO NOT RECEIVE ALL THE PAGES
PLEASE CALL 202-530-1010 AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.**

Note: We are transmitting from a Canon Model FAX-L770
(compatible with any Group I, Group II or Group III machine).

THIS FACSIMILE MESSAGE AND ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTS ARE INTENDED ONLY FOR THE USE OF THE ADDRESSEE INDICATED ABOVE. INFORMATION THAT IS PRIVILEGED OR OTHERWISE CONFIDENTIAL MAY BE CONTAINED THEREIN. IF YOU ARE NOT THE INTENDED RECIPIENT, YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED THAT ANY DISSEMINATION, REVIEW OR USE OF THIS MESSAGE, DOCUMENTS OR INFORMATION CONTAINED THEREIN IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED. IF YOU HAVE RECEIVED THIS MESSAGE IN ERROR, PLEASE NOTIFY US IMMEDIATELY BY TELEPHONE OR FACSIMILE AND MAIL THE ORIGINAL TO US AT THE ABOVE ADDRESS. THANK YOU.

00684.003216.

PATENT APPLICATION

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of:) Examiner: T. Artman
Yoshiyuki KURAMOTO) Group Art Unit: 2882
Application No.: 09/901,087) Allowed: December 30, 2002
Filed: July 10, 2001) Confirmation No.: 7072
For: MEASURING SYSTEM FOR) March 31, 2003
PERFORMANCE OF IMAGING) (Monday)
OPTICAL SYSTEM

Commissioner for Patents
Box Issue Fee
Washington, D.C. 20231

PATENT PROOF COPY PILOT PROJECT AMENDMENT

Sir:

In regard to the Patent Proof Copy Pilot Project, Applicant requests entry of the following corrections as indicated by the mark-ups on the attached Applicant Proof Copy of the above-identified application:

Column 2, line 35, "of-the" should read -- of the --.

Column 2, line 45, "unit" should read -- units --.

Column 5, line 33, "examined," should read -- examined --.

Column 6, line 1, "example" should read -- example --.

Column 6, line 20, "camera" should read -- camcra. --.

Column 9, line 2, "point" should read -- point. --.

Column 9, line 23, "point" should read -- point. --.

Column 9, line 35, "used" should read -- used. --.

Column 11, line 2, "it" should read -- it passes --.

Column 11, line 4, "49," should read -- 49. --.

Column 11, line 56, "5" should read -- 5. --.

Column 15, line 11, "21," should read -- 22, --.

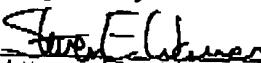
Column 16, line 13, "slate" should read -- slate --.

Applicant believes that these errors arose due to the fault of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office and should be entered in accordance with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office Pilot Program.

No fee is believed to be due with the filing of this paper. Nevertheless, the Commissioner may charge Deposit Account No. 06-1205 should any fee be deemed necessary for filing this paper.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address given below.

Respectfully submitted,



Attorney for Applicant
Steven E. Warner
Registration No. 33,326

FITZPATRICK, CELLA, HARPER & SCINTO
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, New York 10112-3801
Facsimile: (212) 218-2200
SEW/eab

DC_MAIN 128302 v 1

3 | 6 | 03
4 | 7 | 03

Patent Patent Copy PMS Project



UNITED STATES
PATENT AND
TRADEMARK OFFICE

An Agency of the United States
Department of Commerce

Return Fax Sheet
Fax No. 215-682-8284
Application No. **09/901,087**

- There were no errors on the proof copy.

Corrections to Copy – Please check if corrections are required:

- Incorrect, duplicated, omitted words
 Incorrect, omitted punctuation
 Incorrect, omitted spacing
 Other: _____
 Apply unentered/entered but missing/to be filed papers
 (Please include courtesy copy with your transmission.)

- CPA
 RCE
 IDS
 Declaration
 Change of Attorney
 Small Entity Statement
 Change of Address

Date

Date

- Claim for Priority
 Claim/Spec. Amendments

Customer Name (Number): Fitzpatrick, Cella, Harper & Scinto - (5514)
 Contact and Fax: Anthony Zupcic - (212)218-2240

Reviewer: Steven E. Werner Reg. No. 33,326

Comments:

Comments:	
-----------	--

Applicant Proof Copy

Kuramoto

Application No.: 09/901,087
Response Date: Apr. 3, 2003

(54) MEASURING SYSTEM FOR PERFORMANCE OF IMAGING OPTICAL SYSTEM

2001/0001577 A1 * 5/2001 Ukaaji 356/500

(76) Inventor: Yoshiyuki Kuramoto, Utsunomiya (JP)

* cited by examiner

(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 111 days.

Primary Examiner—Robert H. Kim
Assistant Examiner—Thomas R Artman

(21) Appl. No.: 09/901,087

(22) Filed: Jul. 10, 2001

(65) Prior Publication Data

US 2002/0057495 A1 May 16, 2002

(30) Foreign Application Priority Data

Jul. 10, 2000 (JP) 2000-208680

(51) Int. Cl.⁶ G01B 11/02

(52) U.S. Cl. 356/515

(58) Field of Search 356/515, 512, 356/124

(56) References Cited

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

5,815,268 A * 9/1998 LaPleur 356/515

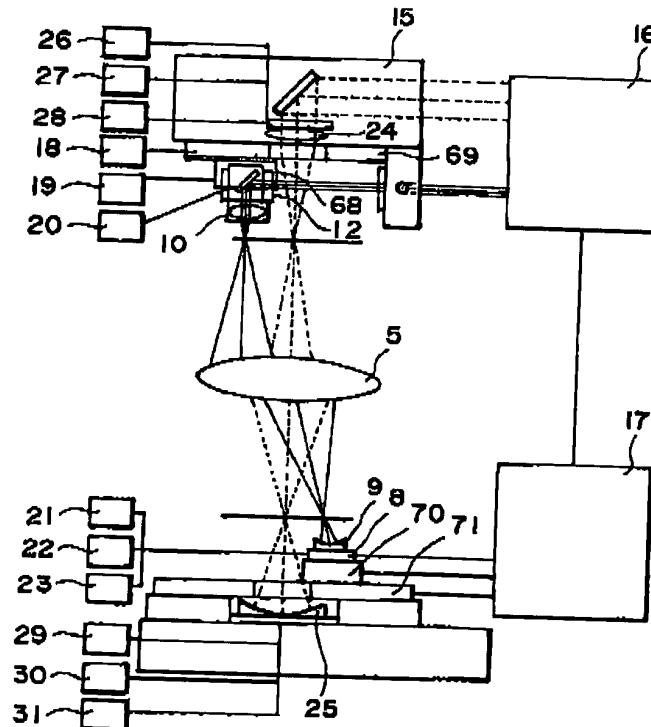
5,838,442 A * 11/1998 Bray 356/512

5,898,501 A * 4/1999 Suzuki et al. 356/511

(57) ABSTRACT

Disclosed is a measuring system for measuring performance of an imaging optical system by use of an interferometer, which includes an interferometer arranged to measure transmission wavefronts separately or sequentially, in relation to at least one of plural measurement points defined along a plane perpendicular to an optical axis of the imaging optical system, wherein position coordinates of object side and image side imaging points of the plural measurement points are measured, and a computing unit being communicated with the interferometer, the computing unit being operable to calculate a wavefront as measured by the interferometer and at least one of a wavefront aberration and an imaging state of the imaging optical system, and the computing unit being operable to correct a measured value related to at least one of a wavefront aberration and an imaging state of the imaging optical system at another measurement point, while taking, as a reference, at least one of a wavefront aberration and an imaging state at a standard point set along a plane perpendicular to the optical axis.

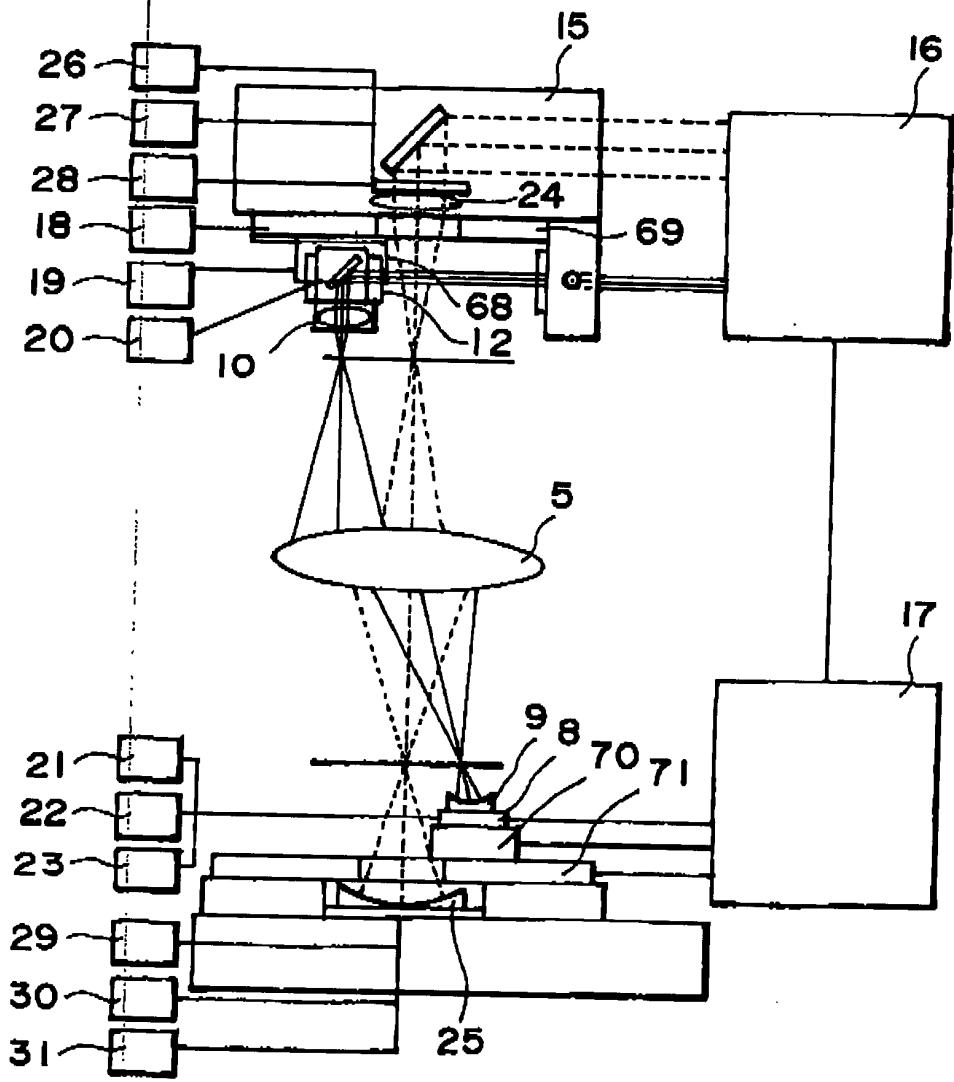
27 Claims, 7 Drawing Sheets



Applicant Proof Copy

Sheet 1 of 7

09/901,087

**F I G. 1**

Applicant Proof Copy

Sheet 2 of 7

09/901,087

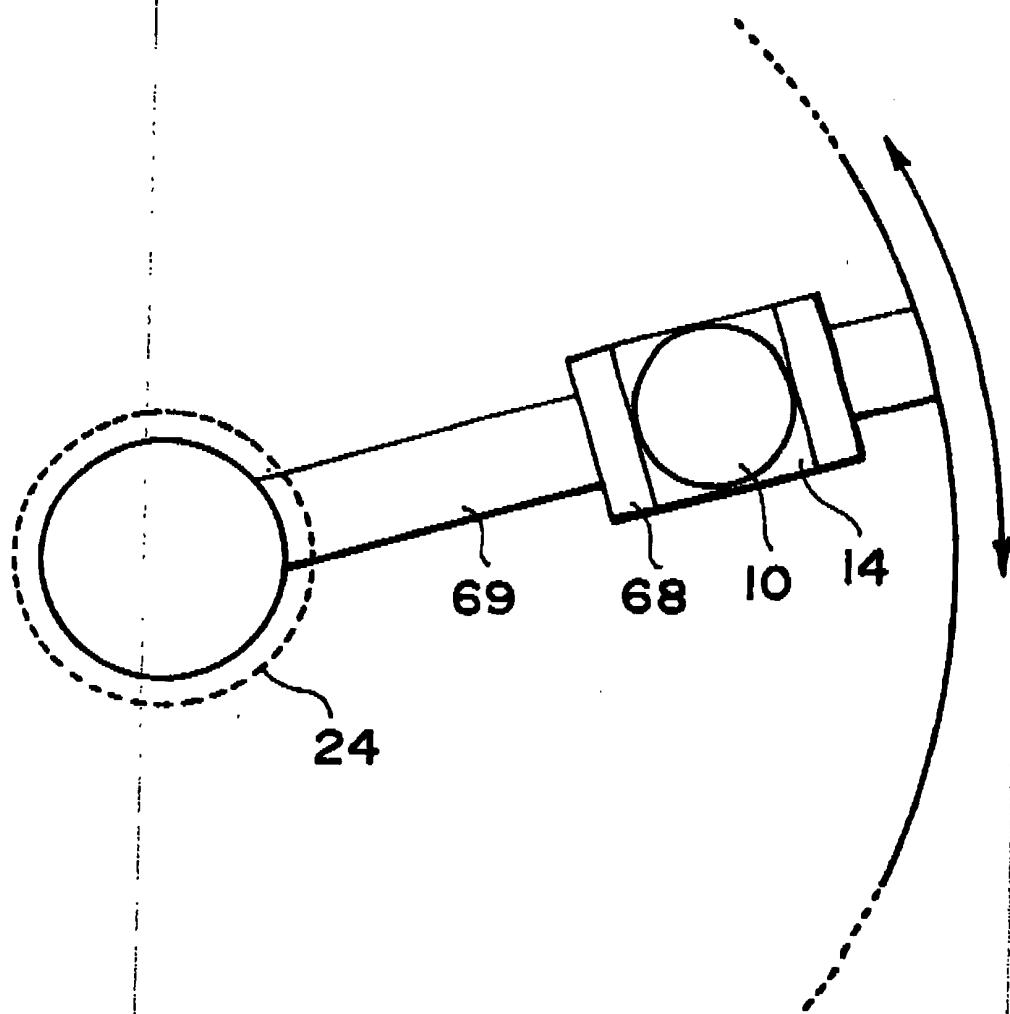
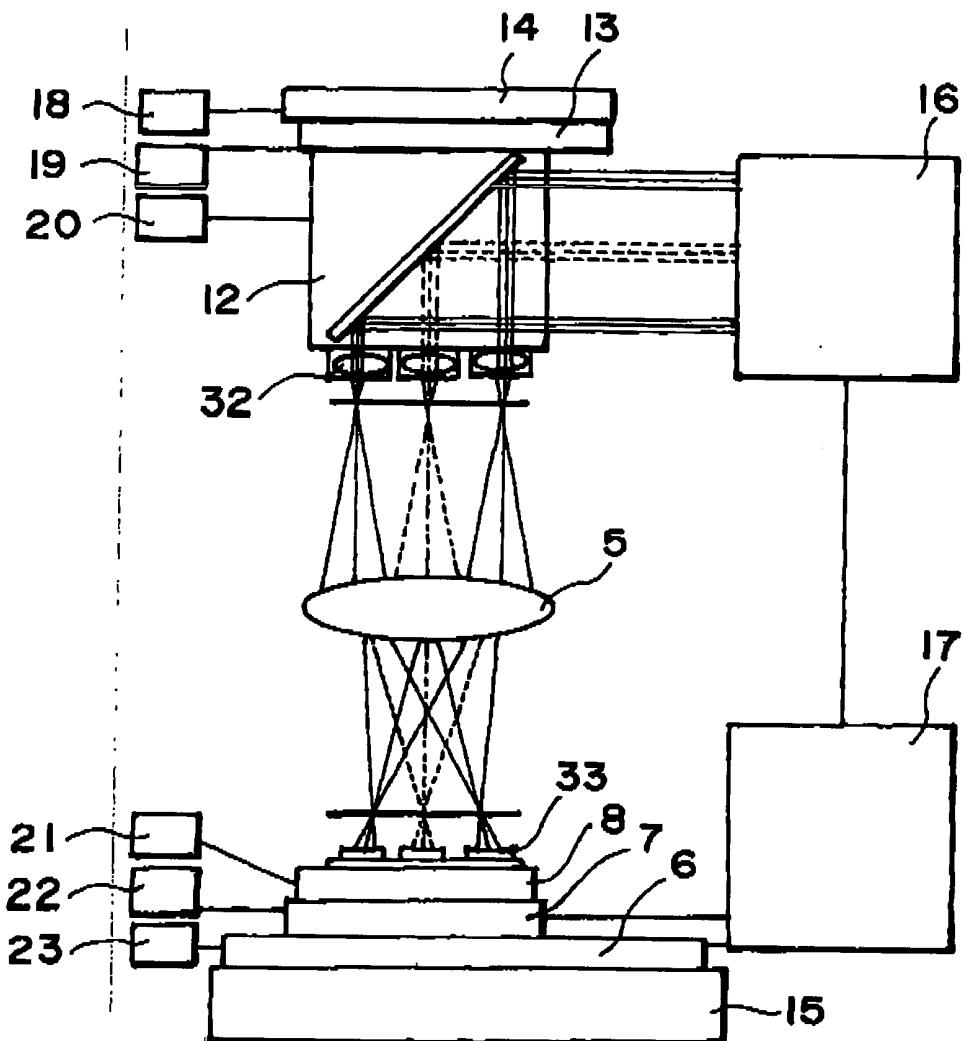


FIG. 2

Applicant Proof Copy

Sheet 3 of 7

09/901,087

**F I G. 3**

Applicant Proof Copy

Sheet 4 of 7

09/901,087

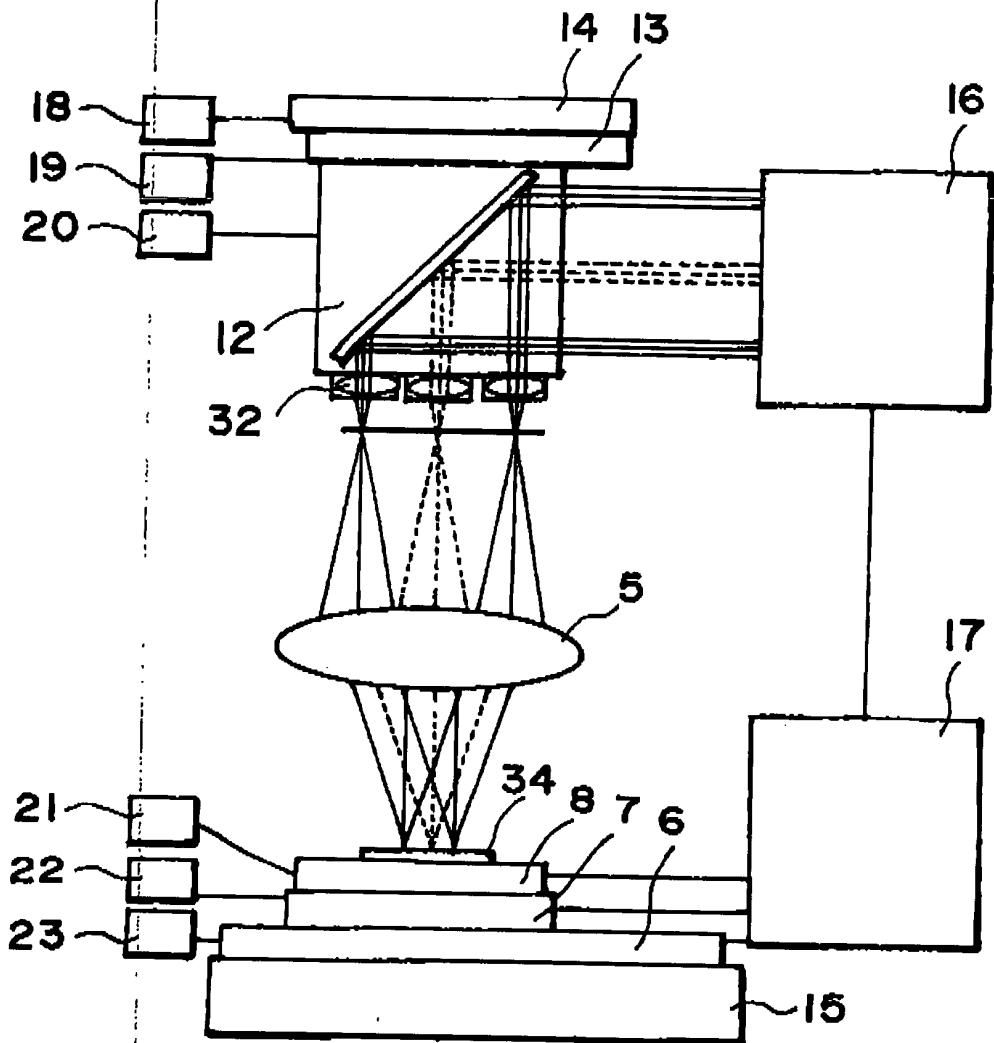
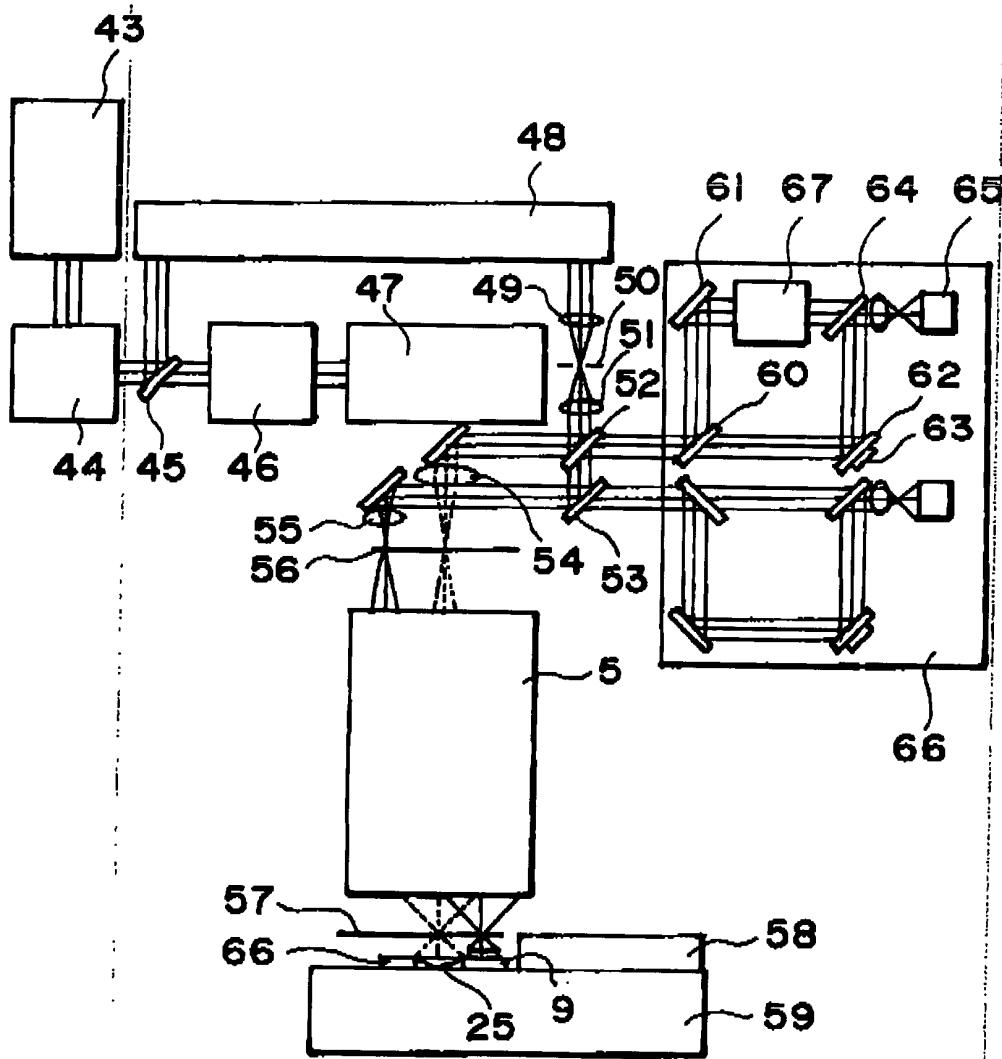


FIG. 4

Applicant Proof Copy

Sheet 5 of 7

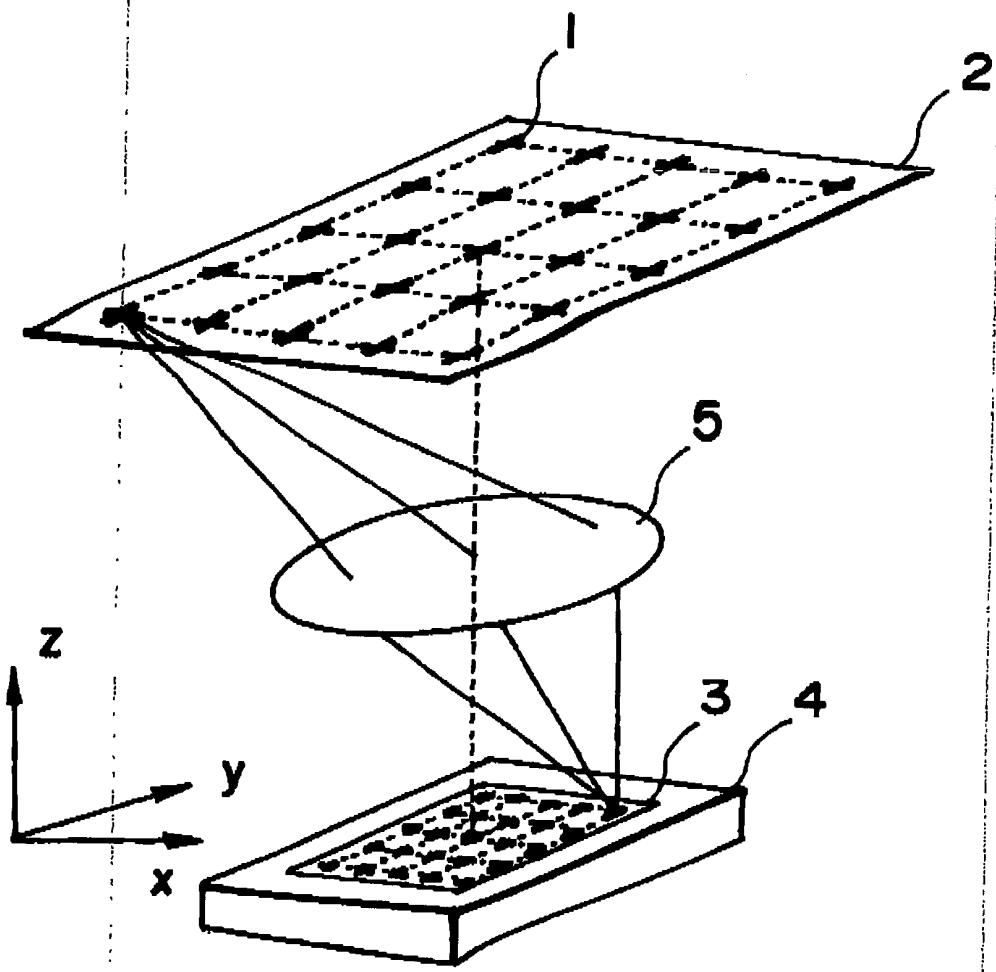
09/901,087

**F I G. 5**

Applicant Proof Copy

Sheet 6 of 7

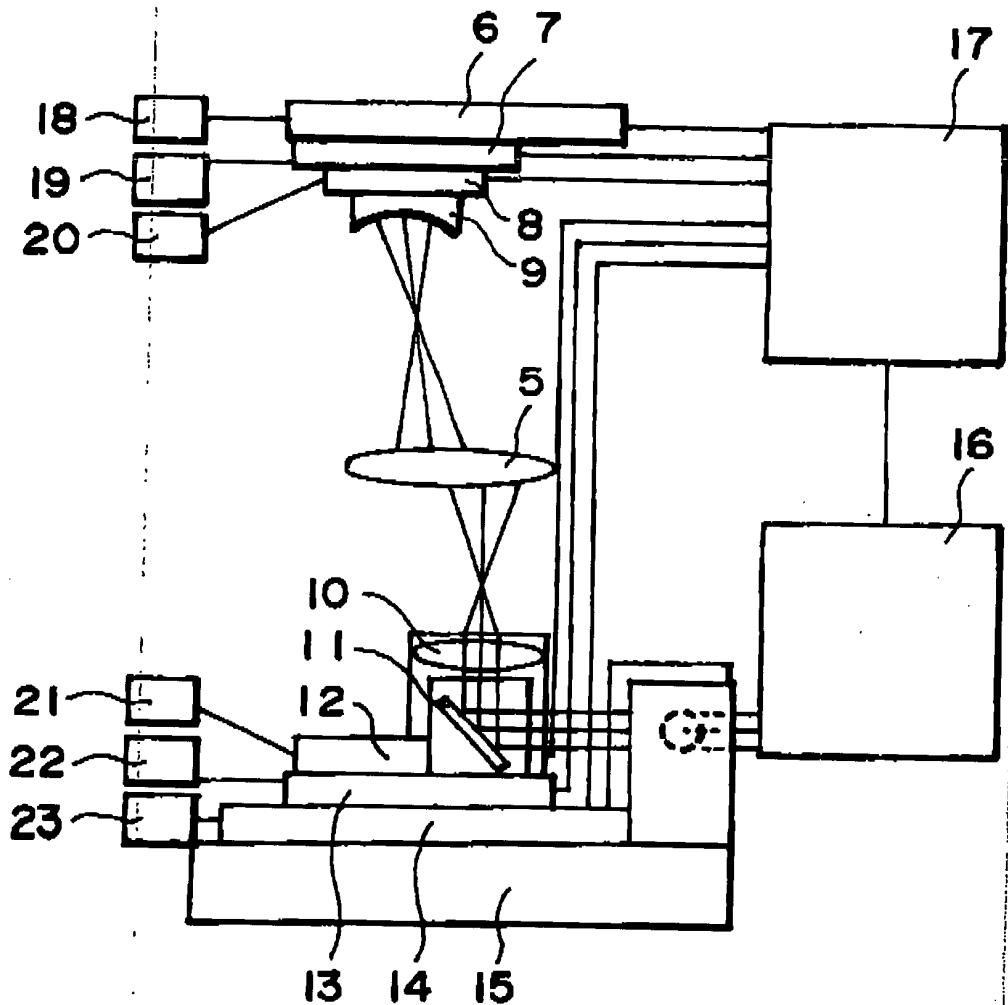
09/901,087

**F I G. 6**

Applicant Proof Copy

Sheet 7 of 7

09/901,087

**F I G. 7**

Applicant Proof Copy

09/901,087

1

**MEASURING SYSTEM FOR PERFORMANCE
OF IMAGING OPTICAL SYSTEM****FIELD OF THE INVENTION AND RELATED
ART**

This invention relates to a measuring method and a measuring system for measuring the performance of an imaging optical system. More particularly, the invention concerns high precision measurement of distortion and field curvature of an imaging optical system.

Conventionally, high precision measurement of distortion and curvature of field of an imaging optical system such as an imaging lens used in a projection exposure apparatus, is based on two methods such as follows.

FIG. 6 shows a first measurement method in which a plurality of patterns 1 of the same shape, formed on a reference sample 2 at positions corresponding to the view angle of a lens 5 to be inspected, are projected by the lens 5 onto a photosensitive member as reference patterns. The photosensitive member having the patterns transferred thereto is then subjected to a development process, whereby images of the reference patterns are made visible upon the photosensitive member.

The transferred and developed images of the reference patterns on the photosensitive member are then subjected to a measurement process for measuring absolute position coordinates (X_i, Y_i) ("i" is the pattern number). The absolute position coordinates measurement is based on observation using a microscope, for example. From the measured position coordinates (X_i, Y_i) of each patterns thus obtained and the idealistic position coordinates (X_0, Y_0) of these patterns, the imaging position errors (Dx_i, Dy_i), that is, distortion, can be calculated in accordance with the following equations:

$$Dx_i = X_i - X_0 \quad \text{and} \quad Dy_i = Y_i - Y_0$$

In the measurement of curvature of field, after the reference patterns mentioned above are once transferred, the photosensitive member 3 is moved in X and Y directions (directions orthogonal to the optical axis of the lens to be inspected), by moving a three-axis stage 4 shown in FIG. 6. The movement amount in the X and Y directions is made larger than the size of each reference pattern image but smaller than the spacing of two adjacent reference pattern images. Subsequently, while keeping the coordinates (X, Y) of the stage, the stage is moved in a Z-axis direction (optical axis direction), by which the photosensitive member 3 is moved out of focus with the image plane of the lens. Then, plural reference patterns are transferred to the photosensitive member.

The sequential procedure of X, Y and Z stage motions and pattern transfer operation described above is repeated until a necessary defocus amount is accomplished. After the printing operation under the last defocus-condition is completed, like the distortion measurement described hereinbefore, the photosensitive member 3 is developed, whereby transferred images of the reference patterns are produced.

In this manner, in the measurement of curvature of field, in relation to each view angle position, images of reference patterns are transferred to a single photosensitive member, under different defocus conditions. With respect to each view angle position, by comparing transferred defocus images, a sharpest image is chosen and the corresponding defocus position is determined as the image plane position.

Applicant Proof Copy

2

The comparison of the reference pattern images is based on observation using a microscope, for example. Then, the image plane positions determined at each view angle positions are compared with each other, by which the curvature of field inside the view angle of the lens 5 to be inspected can be obtained.

FIG. 7 shows a second measuring method which uses an interferometer in place of transferred images.

The structure of FIG. 7 is what can be called a Fizeau type interferometer, and it comprises a transmission sphere lens (TS lens) 10 whose final surface is used as a reference surface, and a reflectance sphere mirror (RS mirror) 9, and so on.

Parallel light emitted from a major assembly of the 15 interferometer is reflected by a fixed mirror, mounted on a base table, in a direction of the depth of the sheet of the drawing (i.e., forwardly in the drawing). The reflected light is then reflected by a mirror which is disposed on a TS lens driving Y stage 14 and, thereafter, it is reflected by another 20 mirror 11 mounted on a TS lens driving X stage 13. The light is then incident on the TS lens 10 which is mounted on a TS lens driving Z stage 12. The light passing through the TS lens 10 is converged upon a rear focal plane of the TS lens 10, wherein the point of convergence is defined to be registered approximately with the image plane of the lens 5 to be inspected. After this, the light passing through the lens 5 is collected again on the object plane.

Here, the RS mirror 9 is disposed so that the curvature center thereof coincides approximately with the point of convergence of the light upon the object plane of the lens 5. The light incident on the RS mirror 9 goes backwardly along its oncoming path, and it enters the interferometer major assembly 6 as a detection wave. On the other hand, a portion of the light incident on the TS lens 10 is reflected by the reference surface of the TS lens 10, and it goes backwardly along its oncoming path, such that it enters the interferometer major assembly 16 as a reference wave.

Based on the detection wave and the reference wave thus entered, an interference fringe is produced in the interferometer major assembly 16. Precise measurement based on a fringe scan method, for example, is performed to measure the interference fringe, and calculation of the transmission wavefront at the measurement image point of the lens 5 is executed.

Distance measuring unit 18-23 measure the position coordinates (TSXi, TSYi, TSZi) of the TS lens 10 adjacent its rear focal point, in the transmission wavefront measurement, as well as the position coordinates (RSXi, RSYi, RSZi) of the RS mirror 9 adjacent its curvature center. The measurement may use a distance measuring gauge or an encoder, for example.

Distortion can be calculated on the basis of a tilt component of the wavefront to be measured, as well as the coordinates of the TS lens focus and the RS mirror curvature center. The error quantity (DX_i, DY_i) between the idealistic imaging position and the actual imaging position with respect to the X and Y directions, namely, distortion, is given by the following equations:

$$DX_i = TSXi - RSXi + \Delta TSXi \\ DY_i = TSYi - RSYi + \Delta TSYi$$

where $TSXi$ and $TSYi$ are measured values of X and Y coordinates of the TS lens rear focal point at the i-th measurement position, $RSXi$ and $RSYi$ are measured values of X and Y coordinates of the RS mirror curvature center at the i-th measurement position, and $\Delta TSXi$ and $\Delta TSYi$ are

Applicant Proof Copy

09/901,087

3

correction amounts for the position coordinates of the TS lens 10 as obtainable from the tilt components in X and Y directions of the measured wavefront, which can be given by the following equations:

$$\Delta T_{SX} = -TiltX_i \lambda / NA/2$$

$$\Delta T_{SY} = -TiltY_i \lambda / NA/2$$

where $TiltX_i$ and $TiltY_i$ are tilt components in X and Y directions obtainable from the measured wavefront, λ is the wavelength, NA is the image-plane side numerical aperture of the lens 5 to be inspected, and β is an idealistic magnification. Also, the symbol "i" denotes the number which represents the position of the measurement point.

Similarly, the image plane position $DZ(x, y)$ of the measurement point i having a coordinates (x, y) is determined by the defocus component of the measured wavefront as well as the Z coordinates of the TS lens focal point and the RS mirror curvature center, and it can be given by the following equation:

$$DZ(x, y) = TSZ(x, y) - TSZ(0, 0) + \beta(RSZ(x, y) - RSZ(0, 0)) + DZ_0(x, y) - DZ_0(0, 0)$$

wherein $DZ_0(0, 0)$ is the defocus component obtained from the transmission wavefront at an origin $(0, 0)$ which is the image point on the optical axis, $TSZ(x, y)$, and $RSZ(x, y)$ are measured values of Z coordinates of the TS lens focal point and RS mirror curvature center at the point (x, y) , respectively, and $TSZ(0, 0)$ and $RSZ(0, 0)$ are measured values of Z coordinates of the TS lens focal point and RS mirror curvature center at the origin $(0, 0)$, respectively.

The measurement at the first measurement point is completed with the above-described procedure, and subsequently, the TS lens 10 and the RS mirror 9 are moved toward a next measurement position, if any, and a similar measurement process is performed. This procedure is repeated for all the measurement points.

Although FIG. 7 shows a structure which is telecentric on the image side, the lens 5 may be an imaging lens being telecentric both on the object side and the image side. Further, the measurement can be done even to an imaging lens not being telecentric, provided that the TS lens is disposed so that the TS lens chief ray and the chief ray of the lens to be inspected are registered with each other. This can be accomplished by tilting the TS lens, for example.

In the first measuring method described above, since it needs a printing process and a development process, the measurement precision may be deteriorated by a factor attributable to the process, namely, wafer flatness, for example. Even after the development process, it needs several processes such as a measurement process using a microscope. Additionally, the procedure in each process is complicated. As a result, it requires cumbersome works and much time to obtain a single distortion measured value. More fundamentally, there is a possibility of accumulation of errors of measured values, being accumulated with the progress of processes. Further, in relation to the measurement of curvature of field, the curvature of field must be detected on the basis of the results of printing performed under different defocus conditions. This requires much time, and it involves deterioration of the measurement precision.

In the second measuring method using an interferometer, on the other hand, measurement of distortion at a measurement image point as well as measurement of the focal plane are repeated with respect to different points, and a distortion distribution and the curvature of field are calculated from the measurement results. This requires a long time for comple-

Applicant Proof Copy

4

tion of the measurements to the whole view angle of the lens to be inspected. The TS lens or RS mirror mounted stage may be influenced by a change in environment or the like, and a drift may be produced in the measured value of the distortion or focal plane at each measurement image points. Further, due to the increasing precision of the lens to be inspected, measurement of temperature or pressure, for example, necessary for the environment correction becomes difficult.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

It is accordingly an object of the present invention to enable high precision measurement of distortion and curvature of field of an imaging optical system such as a lens, for example, which is free from at least one of the inconveniences described hereinbefore.

These and other objects, features and advantages of the present invention will become more apparent upon a consideration of the following description of the preferred embodiments of the present invention taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a schematic view of a first embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 2 is a schematic view of an interference measuring unit in a second embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 3 is a schematic view of a third embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 4 is a schematic view of a fourth embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 5 is a schematic view of a fifth embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 6 is a schematic view for explaining a first conventional measuring method.

FIG. 7 is a schematic view for explaining a second conventional measuring method.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

FIG. 1 shows a first embodiment of the present invention.

In FIG. 1, the interferometer comprises a major assembly 16 and two sets of RS mirrors 9 and 25 and TS lenses 10 and 24 to be used for an image point on an optical axis (which is a standard image point for providing a reference value for drift correction) and for another measurement point, respectively. The structure of FIG. 1 is what is called a Fizeau type interferometer, and the final surface of the TS lens (Transmission Sphere lens) is used as a reference surface. It is to be noted here that, while the standard image point can be set at any desired position if predetermined, from the standpoint of balance to all the measurement points, preferably an image point on the optical axis may be chosen therefor.

Hereinafter, the TS lens 24 and the RS mirror 25 for the image point on the optical axis will be referred to as a drift value referring TS lens 24 and a drift value referring RS mirror, respectively. The TS lens 10 and the RS mirror 9 for the other measurement point will be referred to simply as a TS lens 10 and an RS mirror 9.

Parallel light emitted from the major assembly 16 of the interferometer is reflected by a fixed mirror, mounted on a base table 15, in a direction of the depth of the sheet of the drawing (i.e., forwardly in the drawing). The reflected light

Applicant Proof Copy

09/901,087

5

is then reflected by a mirror which is disposed on a TS lens driving Y stage 14 and another mirror which is mounted on a TS lens driving X stage 13. The reflected light is then incident on the TS lens 10 which is mounted on a TS lens driving Z stage 12. The light passing through the TS lens 10 is converged at a position which is upon the rear focal plane of the TS lens 10 and which is substantially coincident with the object plane of the lens 5. The thus converged light passes the lens 5 to be inspected and, thereafter, it is collected again upon the image plane of the lens 5. At the image plane side, the RS mirror (Reflectance Sphere mirror) 9 is disposed so that the curvature center thereof coincides approximately with the point of convergence of the light upon the image plane of the lens 5. Thus, the light as reflected by the RS mirror 9 goes backwardly along its oncoming path, and it enters the interferometer major assembly 16 as a detection wave.

On the other hand, a portion of the light incident on the TS lens 10 is reflected by the reference surface of the TS lens 10, and it goes backwardly along its oncoming path, such that it enters the interferometer major assembly 16 as a reference wave.

The drift value referring interferometer has a similar structure. Light passing through the drift value referring TS lens 24 is converged at a rear focal plane of the lens 24. The position of the convergence point approximately coincides with the object plane of the lens 5 to be examined. The collected light passes the lens 5 and, thereafter, it is collected again at the image plane side. At the image plane side, the drift value referring RS mirror 25 is disposed so that its curvature center approximately coincides with the light convergence point upon the image plane of the lens to be examined. The light reflected by the RS mirror goes backwardly along its oncoming path, and it enters the interferometer major assembly 16 as a drift value referring detection wave.

On the other hand, a portion of the light entering the drift value referring TS lens 24, fixedly mounted on the base table 15, is reflected by the reference surface of the lens 24, and it goes backwardly along its oncoming path and enters the interferometer major assembly as a drift value referring reference wave.

In this embodiment, the drift value referring RS mirror 25 and the other RS mirror 9 for the remaining measurement point have different curvature radii and, also, the distance between the final surface of the drift value referring TS lens 25 and the rear focal point thereof differs from the distance between the final surface of the TS lens 10 for the remaining measurement point and the rear focal point thereof. However, these sizes may be made equal to each other. Further, the TS lens 24 and the RS mirror 25 may not be fixed but they may be provided on a movable stage.

In this embodiment, as regards the standard image point, the measurement is performed only by use of the drift value referring optical system.

The TS lens driving stages 12, 68 and 69 as well as the RS mirror driving stages 8, 70 and 71 should be structured so as to avoid disturbance to the light which passes the drift value referring optical system. In this embodiment, as shown in FIG. 2, the TS lens is provided as an rθZ stage about the optical axis of the drift value referring optical system, and there are a central portion of a θ stage 69 and an opening. This facilitates the mechanical design for avoiding the disturbance or interference.

The RS mirror 9 and the drift value referring RS mirror 25 can be scanningly moved in the optical axis direction by

Applicant Proof Copy

6

example

means of a piezoelectric device, for example. At each span positions, an interference fringe due to the drift value referring reference wave and the drift value referring detection wave (hereinafter, first interference fringe), as well as an interference fringe due to the reference wave and the detection wave (hereinafter, second interference fringe) are measured by a camera inside the interferometer major assembly, as the intensity data. The measurement result is transmitted to a host computer, and transmission wavefronts (hereinafter, first transmission wavefront and second transmission wavefront) are calculated as phase data of the first and second interference fringes. The interference fringe measurement uses a fringe scan method, such that high precision phase measurement is enabled. The camera inside the interferometer major assembly, for detecting the interference fringe intensity may be provided in two independent channels for the first and second interference fringes, separately, or it may be provided in a single channel structure wherein both of the first and second interference fringes are detected by a one and the same camera.

The distance measuring units 18-23 and 26-31 are operable to measure the position coordinates (TSXi, TSYi, TSZi) adjacent the rear focal point of the TS lens 10 in the transmission wavefront measurement, the position coordinates (RSXi, RSYi, RSZi) adjacent the curvature center of the RS mirror 9, the position coordinates (TSX0i, TSY0i, TSZ0i) adjacent the rear focal point of the drift value referring TS lens 24, and the position coordinates (RSX0i, RSY0i, RSZ0i) adjacent the curvature center of the drift value referring RS mirror 25.

In the position coordinates measurement, a mirror is disposed at a position close to both points, and this mirror position is measured by using an interference distance gauge, for example. When the measurement is carried out by using a mirror placed away from the both points, the posture of the TS lens and RS mirror (i.e., pitching, yawing and rolling) may be measured so that the distance between the measurement point and the idealistic measurement point can be corrected.

In this embodiment, the measuring units 18-23 use interference distance gauges, and the drift value referring optical system and the optical system for the other measurement point are measured separately. From the difference in measured distance in this structure, the optical system for the measurement point can always be represented by a relative value with respect to the drift value referring optical system, such that the influence of the drift of the movable stage in the optical system for the measurement point can be reduced. Thus, the measurement with the drift value referring optical system for measuring the reference image point is performed frequently, in other words, it is done many times more than the measurement for the measurement point.

Next, measurement of distortion and curvature of field in the present invention will be described in greater detail.

The drift value referring TS lens 24 and RS mirror 25 are fixed at an image point on the optical axis and an object point on the optical axis, that is, a standard point. In this state, the RS mirror 9 and the RS lens 10 are moved toward the i-th measurement point. The motion is performed while aiming at the coordinates in which a conjugate relation is substantially satisfied between the rear focal point of the TS lens and the curvature center of the RS mirror. The coordinates being aimed at are set as relative coordinates with respect to the RS mirror 25 and TS lens 24, being disposed at the origin.

Subsequently, measurement of the transmission wavefront is performed at the i-th measurement point.

Applicant Proof Copy

09/901,087

7

Simultaneously, the position coordinates of the TS lens rear focal point, RS mirror curvature center, the drift value referring TS lens rear focal point, and the drift value referring RS mirror curvature center. Here, the transmission wavefront which is obtainable from a standard point for referring to the drift value is called a first transmission wavefront, and the transmission wavefront which is obtainable from the i-th measurement point is called a second transmission wavefront.

Then, the tilt component and the defocus component of the measured transmission wavefronts are calculated. These components can be detected by fitting the transmission wavefront data in accordance with Zernike polynomial, using a least square method, for example. The calculation is done with respect to each of the first and second transmission wavefronts.

From the tilt components of the measured first and second transmission wavefronts, the measured coordinates (TSXi, TSYi) of the TS lens 10, the measured coordinates (RSXi, RSYi) of the RS mirror 9, the measured coordinates (TSX0i, TSY0i) of the drift value referring TS lens 24, and the measured coordinates (RSX0i, RSY0i) of the drift value referring RS mirror 25, and in accordance with equations below, error quantities (DXi, DYi) between the idealistic imaging position and the actual imaging position with respect to the X and Y directions, namely, the distortion, can be calculated.

$$DX_i = [TSX_i - (TSX_0i - TSX_01)] - \beta(RSX_i - (RSX_0i - RSX_01)) + \Delta TSX_i$$

$$DY_i = [TSY_i - (TSY_0i - TSY_01)] - \beta(RSY_i - (RSY_0i - RSY_01)) + \Delta TSY_i$$

where TSX01 and TSY01 as well as RSX01 and RSY01 are measured coordinates of the drift value referring TS lens and RS mirror in the first measurement, $\Delta TSXi$ and $\Delta TSYi$ are correction amounts for the position coordinates of the TS lens as obtainable from the tilt components in X and Y directions of the measured wavefront, which are given by the following equations:

$$\Delta TSXi = [\pi \lambda x_i - (\pi \lambda x_0i - \pi \lambda x_01)] \lambda / NA / 2$$

$$\Delta TSYi = [\pi \lambda y_i - (\pi \lambda y_0i - \pi \lambda y_01)] \lambda / NA / 2$$

wherein $TiltX_0i$, $TiltY_0i$, $TiltXi$ and $TiltYi$ are tilt components in X and Y directions at the standard image point and the measurement image point as obtainable from the first and second wavefronts in the i-th measurement, $TiltX_01$ and $TiltY_01$ are tilt components in X and Y directions of the reference image point (the position of the drift value referring TS lens 24 and RS mirror 25) in the first measurement, λ is the wavelength, NA is the image-plane side numerical aperture of the lens 5 to be inspected, β is an idealistic magnification, and i is the number which represents the position of the measurement point.

The image plane position $DZ(X_i, Y_i)$ of the i-th measurement point can be expressed by the following equation, in terms of the defocus components of the first and second transmission wavefronts, and the coordinates of the TS lens focal point and the curvature center of the RS mirror, as follows.

$$DZ(X_i, Y_i) = TSZ(X_i, Y_i) - TSZ(X_0i, Y_0i) + \beta(RSZ(X_i, Y_i) - RSZ(X_0i, Y_0i)) + DZ_0(X_i, Y_i) - DZ_0(X_0i, Y_0i)$$

wherein $DZ_0(X_0i, Y_0i)$ and $DZ_0(X_i, Y_i)$ are defocus components obtainable from the first and second transmission wavefronts, $TSZ(X_i, Y_i)$ and $RSZ(X_i, Y_i)$ are measured values of the TS lens focal point and RS mirror curvature

Applicant Proof Copy

8

center, $TSZ(X_0i)$ and $RSZ(X_0i, Y_0i)$ are measured values of the position coordinates of the drift value referring TS lens rear focal point and the drift value referring RS mirror curvature center. The defocus component from the measurement wave can be calculated by computing the contrast value while applying a spherical component, corresponding to the defocus component, to the measurement wavefront. The defocus position with a best contrast value are taken as the image point at the point (X_i, Y_i) , for example.

The measurement with regard to the i-th measurement point is completed as above. If there is a subsequent measurement point, the TS lens 10 and the RS mirror 9 are moved toward the next measurement position, and the procedure from the measurement of the transmission wavefront is repeated again.

After the measurement at the last measurement point is completed, the error quantity (DX_i, DY_i) between the idealistic imaging point and the actual imaging point at each measurement points and the focal plane $DZ(X_i, Y_i)$ are synthesized, such that a distortion distribution and curvature of field within the view angle of the lens to be examined are obtained while even taking into account the transmission wavefront.

In this embodiment, an interference distance gauge is used to suppress the drift of a movable stage, and the effect of drift due to any other factor is corrected by continuously monitoring the axial wavefront. Thus, high precision measurement of distortion and curvature of field is enabled.

A second embodiment of the present invention is arranged so that any change with respect to time of distortion and curvature of field can be observed without an observation system for a reference image point as used in the first embodiment, and the structure is similar to the second measuring method.

In order to determine the curvature of field and the distortion distribution inside the view angle of a lens to be inspected, it is necessary to measure the distortion and focal plane at different image points within the view angle. In this embodiment, during measurement with respect to the different image points, measurement of an axial image point corresponding to a standard image point is performed many times. From the quantity of changes in distortion and focal plane at the standard image point, a variation component with respect to time at the other measurement points is calculated, and correction is performed accordingly.

If it is assumed that, with regard to the i-th measurement point (X_i, Y_i) , the measurement of a standard point just before it is performed in relation to the $(i-a)$ th measurement point and the measurement of a standard point just after it is performed at the $(i+b)$ th measurement point, distortion after correction of the i-th variation quantity with respect to time can be determined by the following equations:

$$DX_{dc}(X_i, Y_i) = DX(X_i, Y_i) - [DX_0(i+b) - DX_0(i-a)] / a / (a+b) - [DX_0(i-b) - DX_0(i)] / b$$

$$DY_{dc}(X_i, Y_i) = DY(X_i, Y_i) - [DY_0(i+b) - DY_0(i-a)] / a / (a+b) - [DY_0(i-b) - DY_0(i)] / b$$

The correction formulas mentioned above are determined while taking the variation quantities with respect to time of each measurement image points as linear complement to the variation quantity with respect to time of the standard image point. Here, $DX_{dc}(X_i, Y_i)$ and $DY_{dc}(X_i, Y_i)$ are distortion at the i-th measurement point after correction of the variation with respect to time, $DX(X_i, Y_i)$ and $DY(X_i, Y_i)$ are measured values of distortion at the i-th measurement point, and DX_0 and DY_0 are distortion at the standard image point. Each argument show the correspondence of the mea-

Applicant Proof Copy

09/901,087

9

ment at the standard image point to the number of measurement points. Also, the argument "1" shows that the first measurement is to the standard image point.

As regards the detection of the focal plane, similar correction is possible. More specifically:

$$\begin{aligned} DZ(X_i, Y_i) = & TSZ(X_i, Y_i) - (TSZ_0(i+b) - TSZ_0(i-a))\alpha / (a+b) - \\ & TSZ_0(i-a) + \beta(RSZ(X_i, Y_i) - (RSZ_0(i+b) - \\ & (RSZ_0(i-a))\alpha / (a+b) - RSZ_0(i-a)) + DZ_0(X_i, Y_i) - \\ & (DZ_0(i+b)) - DZ_0(i-a)\alpha / (a+b) - DZ_0(i-a) \end{aligned}$$

where $DZ(X_i, Y_i)$ is the defocus component at the i -th measurement point after correction of the variation with respect to time, $TSZ(X_i, Y_i)$ and $RSZ(X_i, Y_i)$ are measured values of coordinates of the TS lens focus and RS mirror curvature center position at the i -th measurement point, TSZ_0 and RSZ_0 are measured values of the TS lens focus and RS mirror curvature center position at the standard image point. Each argument shows the correspondence of the measurement at the standard point with the number of measurement point. $DZ_0(X_i, Y_i)$ denotes the defocus component obtained from the transmission wavefront. The argument "1" shows that the first measurement is to the standard image point, and β denotes the idealistic imaging magnification of the lens being examined.

In this embodiment, as regards the method of complementing the variation amount at each measurement image point with respect to time, straight complement based on the amount of changes, with time, between two standard-image-point measurements before and after the measurement image point. However, the number of standard image points to be used for the complementation may be other than two. Also, a curved complementation may be used.

Where the above-described correction is carried out to the whole measurement points, any change in distortion or curvature of field with respect to time can be corrected and reduced even by use of a single set of TS lens and RS mirror. Therefore, a lens performance measuring system capable of doing high precision measurement is accomplished.

FIG. 3 shows the structure of a third embodiment according to the present invention. While the first embodiment uses two sets of TS lenses and RS mirrors, this embodiment uses plural sets of TS lenses and RS mirrors, to enable simultaneous measurement at plural measurement points in addition to the standard image point. Because of the increase in number of TS lenses and RS mirrors, independent motion of each TS lens and RS mirror is not adopted in this embodiment.

The curvature centers of each spherical mirrors of the RS mirror group 33 are disposed to satisfy the conjugate relation with the rear focal points of corresponding lenses of the TS lens group 32. Namely, where the position coordinates of the rear focal point of the i -th TS lens are expressed as $(TSXi, TSYi)$ while taking the optical axis as an origin, the position $(RSXi, RSYi)$ of the curvature center of the i -th RS mirror is given by the following equations:

$$RSXi = TSXi/\beta$$

$$RSYi = TSYi/\beta$$

where β is the idealistic imaging magnification of the lens 5 being inspected.

In this embodiment, the rear focus position of each TS lens as well as the curvature center position of each RS mirror, after being manufactured, are measured beforehand.

Applicant Proof Copy

10

As regards the measurement of the focus position of each TS lens, an RS mirror disposed on a movable stage may be used and, without using the lens to be examined, a Fizeau type interferometer may be constructed directly to each TS lens. From the position coordinates of the RS mirror and the tilt component of the measurement wavefront, the rear focus position can be measured. As regards the RS mirror group, similarly, a TS lens may be mounted on a movable stage, and the curvature center position can be measured.

The manner of calculating distortion and focal plane at each measurement points, during and after the measurement, is the same as in the first embodiment. However, since plural measurement points can be measured simultaneously in this embodiment, the influence of stage drift or any change in environment is reduced. Therefore, the measurement time can be shortened considerably.

FIG. 4 shows the structure of a fourth embodiment according to the present invention. In this embodiment, the RS mirror group of the second embodiment is replaced by a plane mirror 34.

The plane mirror 34 is disposed upon the image plane of the lens 5 to be examined. For the measurement, the lens should be telecentric on one side or both sides. If it is telecentric on one side thereof, the chief ray of the TS lens and the chief ray of the lens to be examined should be registered with each other. Thus, the TS lens may be tilted, for example, to this end.

Although the structure is simplified by replacing the RS mirror by a flat mirror, only the revolutionally symmetrical component of the transmission wavefront of the lens to be examined can be calculated with this structure. Therefore, distortion can not be measured in this embodiment. However, simultaneous measurement of the focal plane with respect to different measurement points can be done without difficulties involved in the manufacture of the RS mirror group. This is an advantage in this embodiment. The calculation of the focal plane is similar to that of the second measuring method described hereinbefore.

FIG. 5 shows a fifth embodiment of the present invention. In this embodiment, the lens performance measuring system 40 of the present invention is incorporated into a projection exposure apparatus having a projection optical system which is the lens to be examined. This embodiment enables high precision measurement of distortion and curvature of field of a projection optical system within the major assembly of the projection exposure apparatus.

In FIG. 5, the light emitted from an exposure light source 43 such as an excimer laser is transformed by a beam shaping optical system 44 into a beam shape symmetrical with respect to the optical axis, and then it is directed to a light path interchanging mirror 45. The mirror 45 is retracted out of the light path during the normal exposure process, so that the light is directed toward an illumination optical system 47. More specifically, the light emitted from the beam shaping optical system 44 enters an incoherency-transforming unit 46 by which the coherency of the light is reduced. After this, the light passes the illumination optical system 47, and it illuminates the surface of a reticle 56. The light passing through the reticle enters a projection optical system 5 which is the lens to be examined, and so that a pattern formed on the reticle 56 surface is projected onto the surface of a wafer 57.

There is a wafer chuck 58 disposed inside the view angle of the projection optical system 5.

The structure of an interferometer as being guided by the light path interchanging mirror 45 will be described below.

For measurement of the lens performance, the light emitted from the beam shaping optical system 44 is reflected by

Applicant Proof Copy

09/901,087

11

passes
(9.)

the light path interchanging mirror 45 inserted into the light path, and it through a directing optical system 48 and enters a condensing lens 49. Adjacent the focal point of the condensing lens 49, there is a pinhole 50. The light passing through the pinhole 50 is transformed again into parallel light by means of a collimator lens 51. The diameter of the pinhole 50 may be set to be approximately equal to the diffraction limit determined by the numerical aperture of the condensing lens 49, to regulate the transverse mode of light. The parallel light emitted from the collimator lens 51 is divided by a half mirror 52 into two. In this embodiment, the light reflected by the half mirror is directed to a drift value referring optical system, while the light passing through the mirror is directed to an optical system for the other measurement points.

In the measurement, the wafer chuck 58 moves out of the view angle of the projection optical system and, in place of it, an RS mirror 9 and a drift value referring RS mirror 25 are inserted into the view angle.

In the drift value referring optical system, the light reflected by the half mirror 52 is directed to a collimator lens 54. The rear focal point of the collimator lens 54 is disposed to be approximately registered with the reticle surface 56. As a result, the light collected by the collimator lens 54 is collected again by the projection optical system 5, at a position close to the wafer surface 57. The drift value referring RS mirror 25 is fixedly mounted on a wafer stage 59 so that the curvature center position thereof is disposed to be approximately coincident with a conjugate point of the focal point position of the collimator lens with respect to the projection optical system 5. The light reflected by the RS mirror 25 goes backwardly along its oncoming path, and it is incident again on the half mirror 52.

The light passing through the drift value referring optical system (collimator lens 54, RS mirror 25 and the like) and impinging on the half mirror 52 then passes therethrough, and the light is incident on a half mirror 60 inside the interferometer major assembly 66.

On the other hand, in the optical system for the measurement points, the light passed through the half mirror 52 is reflected by a half mirror 53, and it is directed to a collimator lens 55. The collimator lens 55 is mounted on an X-Y-Z movable stage, and the light convergence point thereof is inside the view angle of the projection optical system 5. It enables motion to any object point adjacent to the reticle surface 56. The manner of directing light to the collimator lens 55 may be the same as in the first embodiment. The rear focal point of the collimator lens 55 is approximately registered with the reticle surface 6 of the projection optical system 5, and the curvature center of the RS mirror 9 is disposed to be approximately coincident with a conjugate point of the focal point position of the collimator lens 55 with respect to the projection optical system 5. As a consequence, the light collected by the collimator lens 55 is collected again on the wafer surface 57 by means of the projection optical system 5. The light is then reflected by the RS mirror 9 which is disposed on an X-Y-Z movable stage 66, fixedly mounted on the wafer stage 59. The reflected light goes backwardly along its oncoming path, toward the half mirror 53.

The inside structure of the interferometer major assembly 66 will now be described.

The light incident on the half mirror 60 is divided thereby into two. The light reflected by the half mirror 60 (hereinafter, "light A") is reflected by a flat mirror 61, and the beam diameter thereof is expanded by a beam expander 67. After this, the light passes through a half mirror 64. On

Applicant Proof Copy

12

the other hand, the light transmitted through the half mirror 60 (hereinafter, "light B") is reflected by a flat mirror 62 which is mounted on a movable stage 63, being moved by a piezoelectric device, for example, and the light is projected on the half mirror 64. The light B is reflected by the half mirror 64, and goes substantially along the same path as the light A. The optical path difference between the light A and the light B, from being divided by the half mirror 60 to being substantially combined into the same path by the half mirror 64, is registered within the range of the coherence length of the exposure light source 43. What can be observed by a CCD camera 65 is an interference fringe produced by the light A and the light B being laterally shifted with respect to the light A.

The observed interference fringe is a differentiated value to the lights A and B, in the same radial direction about the optical axis, having wavefront aberrations corresponding to the sum of the projection optical system 5 and the intermediate optical systems. By integrating it and subtracting therefrom the wavefront aberration and shape errors of the intermediate optical systems, the wavefront aberration of the projection optical system 5 can be determined. The wavefront calculation may be based on a fringe scan method in which the movable stage 63 is moved by an amount corresponding to the wavelength. As regards the wavefront aberration and shape errors of the intermediate optical systems, they may be measured beforehand by using a separate interferometer or, alternatively, it may be measured by using a system error measuring method. In such system error measuring method, an RS mirror 25 may be disposed below the collimator lens 54, and the wavefront aberration is measured in three conditions of zero deg., 180 deg., and apex reflection. From the results, the wavefront aberration of the intermediate optical systems can be detected.

As regards the wavefront passing through the optical system for the measurement points (i.e., collimator lens 55, RS mirror 9 and the like), it can be measured by using a similar interferometer.

Simultaneously with the wavefront measurement at the standard image point, referring to the drift value, and at the remaining measurement points, the position coordinates of the rear focal points of the collimator lenses 34 and 55 and the curvature centers of the RS mirrors 9 and 25 can be measured, in a similar way as the first embodiment.

The manner of measuring distortion and curvature of field on the basis of the wavefront data and position coordinates described above, is essentially the same as in the first embodiment.

The measuring system for measuring the performance of an imaging optical system as has been described above enables correction of the influence of a change with respect to time, such as drift, for example, which adversely affects the measurement. Additionally, the measurement does not need complicated and numerous processes such as exposure and development, in the lens evaluation. Moreover, it can be done without being influenced by a drift of a movable stage or an environmental variation. As a result, the performance of a lens can be measured automatically, easily and precisely.

While the invention has been described with reference to the structures disclosed herein, it is not confined to the details set forth and this application is intended to cover such modifications or changes as may come within the purposes of the improvements or the scope of the following claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A measuring system for measuring performance of an imaging optical system by use of an interferometer, said measuring system comprising:

Applicant Proof Copy

09/901,087

13

an interferometer arranged to measure transmission wavefronts separately or sequentially, in relation to at least one of plural measurement points defined along a plane perpendicular to an optical axis of the imaging optical system, wherein position coordinates of object side and image side imaging points of the plural measurement points are measured; and

a computing unit being communicated with said interferometer, said computing unit being operable to calculate a wavefront as measured by said interferometer and at least one of a wavefront aberration and an imaging state of the imaging optical system, and said computing unit being operable to correct a measured value related to at least one of a wavefront aberration and an imaging state of the imaging optical system at another measurement point, while taking, as a reference, at least one of a wavefront aberration and an imaging state at a standard point set along a plane perpendicular to the optical axis.

2. A measuring system according to claim 1, wherein the measurement of a transmission wavefront and position coordinates with respect to the standard point is performed plural times more than the measurement of the transmission wavefront and position coordinates with respect to another measurement point.

3. A measuring system according to claim 2, wherein measurement of the transmission wavefront and position coordinates with respect to the standard point is performed simultaneously and every time the measurement of the transmission wavefront and position coordinates with respect to another measurement point is performed.

4. A measuring system according to claim 1, wherein the standard point is an object point and an image point on the optical axis of the imaging optical system.

5. A measuring system according to claim 1, wherein the position coordinates of the measurement point concern a relative coordinate system with respect to the position coordinates of the standard point.

6. A measuring system according to claim 1, wherein an optical system for measurement of the standard point is provided separately from an optical system for measurement of the other measurement point.

7. A measuring system according to claim 6, wherein the optical system for measurement of the other measurement point is movable at the object plane side and the image plane side and it has a laser interferometer for monitoring the position coordinates thereof.

8. A measuring system according to claim 6, wherein there are optical systems for measurement of the other measuring points, the number of which corresponds to the number of the measurement points.

9. A measuring system according to claim 1, wherein the measurement with respect to the standard point and the other measurement points is carried out by use of one and the same optical system.

10. A measuring system according to claim 9, the same optical system for measurement of the standard point and the measurement point is movable at the object plane side and the image plane side, and there is a laser interferometer for monitoring the moved position coordinates.

11. A measuring system according to claim 1, wherein, in an optical system for the other measurement point, a chief ray of light impinging on the measurement points is registered with a direction of a chief ray of the imaging optical system.

12. A measuring system according to claim 1 wherein the imaging state includes distortion and curvature of field.

Applicant Proof Copy

14

13. A projection exposure apparatus for performing projection exposure by use of an imaging optical system, said apparatus comprising:

an imaging optical system;

an interferometer arranged to measure transmission wavefronts separately or sequentially, in relation to at least one of plural measurement points defined along a plane perpendicular to an optical axis of the imaging optical system, wherein position coordinates of object side and image side imaging points of the plural measurement points are measured; and

a computing unit being communicated with said interferometer, said computing unit being operable to calculate a wavefront as measured by said interferometer and at least one of a wavefront aberration and an imaging state of the imaging optical system, and said computing unit being operable to correct a measured value related to at least one of a wavefront aberration and an imaging state of the imaging optical system at another measurement point, while taking, as a reference, at least one of a wavefront aberration and an imaging state at a standard point set along a plane perpendicular to the optical axis.

14. A measuring system for measuring performance of an imaging optical system, comprising:

an interferometer arranged to measure transmission wavefronts separately or sequentially, in relation to at least one of plural measurement points defined along a plane perpendicular to an optical axis of the imaging optical system, wherein position coordinates of object side and image side imaging points of the plural measurement points are measured; and

a computing unit being communicated with said interferometer, said computing unit being operable to calculate a wavefront as measured by said interferometer and at least one of a wavefront aberration and an imaging state of the imaging optical system, and said computing unit being operable to correct at least one of distortion and a focal plane at another measurement point of the imaging optical system, while taking, as a reference, at least one of distortion and a focal plane at a standard point set along a plane perpendicular to the optical axis.

15. A measuring system according to claim 14, wherein a result of measurement of distortion and focal plane with respect to the other measurement point is complemented on the basis of a result of measurement made plural times to the distortion and the focal plane with respect to the standard point.

16. A measuring system according to claim 14, wherein the standard point is an object point and an image point on the optical axis of the imaging optical system.

17. A measuring system according to claim 14, wherein the position coordinates of the measurement point concern a relative coordinate system with respect to the position coordinates of the standard point.

18. A measuring system according to claim 14, wherein correction of a change of distortion and focal plane with respect to time is carried out by subtracting the amount of change from the measured values of them.

19. A measuring system according to claim 14, wherein an optical system for measurement of the standard point is provided separately from an optical system for measurement of the other measurement point.

20. A measuring system according to claim 19, wherein the optical system for measurement of the other measure-

Applicant Proof Copy

09/901,087

15

ment point is movable at the object plane side and the image plane side and it has a laser interferometer for monitoring the position coordinates thereof.

21. A measuring system according to claim 19, wherein there are optical system for the other measurement points, of 5 a number the same as the measurement points.

22. A measuring system according to claim 14, wherein the measurement with respect to the standard point and the other measurement points is carried out by use of one and the same optical system.

23. A measuring system according to claim 21, the same 10 optical system for measurement of the standard point and the measurement point is movable at the object plane side and the image plane side, and there is a laser interferometer for monitoring the moved position coordinates.

24. A measuring system according to claim 14, wherein, 15 in an optical system for the other measurement point, a chief ray of light impinging on the measurement points is registered with a direction of a chief ray of the imaging optical system.

25. A projection exposure apparatus for performing projection exposure by use of an imaging optical system, said 20 apparatus comprising:

an imaging optical system;
an interferometer arranged to measure transmission wave- 25 fronts separately or sequentially, in relation to at least one of plural measurement points defined along a plane perpendicular to an optical axis of the imaging optical system, wherein position coordinates of object side and image side imaging points of the plural measurement points are measured;

a computing unit being communicated with said 30 interferometer, said computing unit being operable to calculate a wavefront as measured by said interferometer and at least one of a wavefront aberration and an imaging state of the imaging optical system, and said computing unit being operable to correct at least one of distortion and a focal plane at another measurement point of the imaging optical system, while taking, as a reference, at least one of distortion and a focal plane at a standard point set along a plane perpendicular to the 35 optical axis.

Applicant Proof Copy

16

26. A method of measuring performance of an imaging optical system by use of an interferometer, said method comprising the steps of:

measuring, by use of the interferometer, transmission wavefronts separately or sequentially, in relation to at least one of plural measurement points defined along a plane perpendicular to an optical axis of the imaging optical system, wherein position coordinates of object side and image side imaging points of the plural measurement points are measured;

calculating a wavefront as measured by the interferometer and at least one of a wavefront aberration and an imaging state of the imaging optical system; and

correcting a measured value related to at least one of a wavefront aberration and an imaging state of the imaging optical system at another measurement point, while taking, as a reference, at least one of a wavefront aberration and an imaging state at a standard point set along a plane perpendicular to the optical axis.

27. A method of measuring performance of an imaging optical system by use of an interferometer, said method comprising the steps of:

measuring, by use of the interferometer, transmission wavefronts separately or sequentially, in relation to at least one of plural measurement points defined along a plane perpendicular to an optical axis of the imaging optical system, wherein position coordinates of object side and image side imaging points of the plural measurement points are measured;

calculating a wavefront as measured by said interferometer and at least one of a wavefront aberration and an imaging state of the imaging optical system; and

correcting at least one of distortion and a focal plane at another measurement point of the imaging optical system, while taking, as a reference, at least one of distortion and a focal plane at a standard point set along a plane perpendicular to the optical axis.

State

* * * * *



09901087

J1017 U.S. PTO
09/901087
09/10/01

INITIALS _____

CONTENTS

Date Received
(Incl. C. of M.)
or
Date MailedDate Received
(Incl. C. of M.)
or
Date Mailed

1. Application 7 parts papers, 42.
2. ~~1st class mailing address~~ 08/02/01, 43.
~~RECEIVED C.O.D.~~ 10/12/01, 44.
3. Priority document 11-30-01, 45.
4. ~~Priority document~~ 12/10/01, 46.
5. ~~Priority document~~ 12/10/01, 47.
6. _____, 48.
7. _____, 49.
8. _____, 50.
9. _____, 51.
10. _____, 52.
11. _____, 53.
12. _____, 54.
13. _____, 55.
14. _____, 56.
15. _____, 57.
16. _____, 58.
17. _____, 59.
18. _____, 60.
19. _____, 61.
20. _____, 62.
21. _____, 63.
22. _____, 64.
23. _____, 65.
24. _____, 66.
25. _____, 67.
26. _____, 68.
27. _____, 69.
28. _____, 70.
29. _____, 71.
30. _____, 72.
31. _____, 73.
32. _____, 74.
33. _____, 75.
34. _____, 76.
35. _____, 77.
36. _____, 78.
37. _____, 79.
38. _____, 80.
39. _____, 81.
40. _____, 82.

(LEFT OUTSIDE)